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# 2001 Public Involvement Telephone Survey



Multimodal Planning Bureau  
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Montana Department of Transportation



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# 2001 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TELEPHONE SURVEY

**Prepared by:**

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Rail, Transit, & Planning Division  
Multimodal Planning Bureau

December 2001




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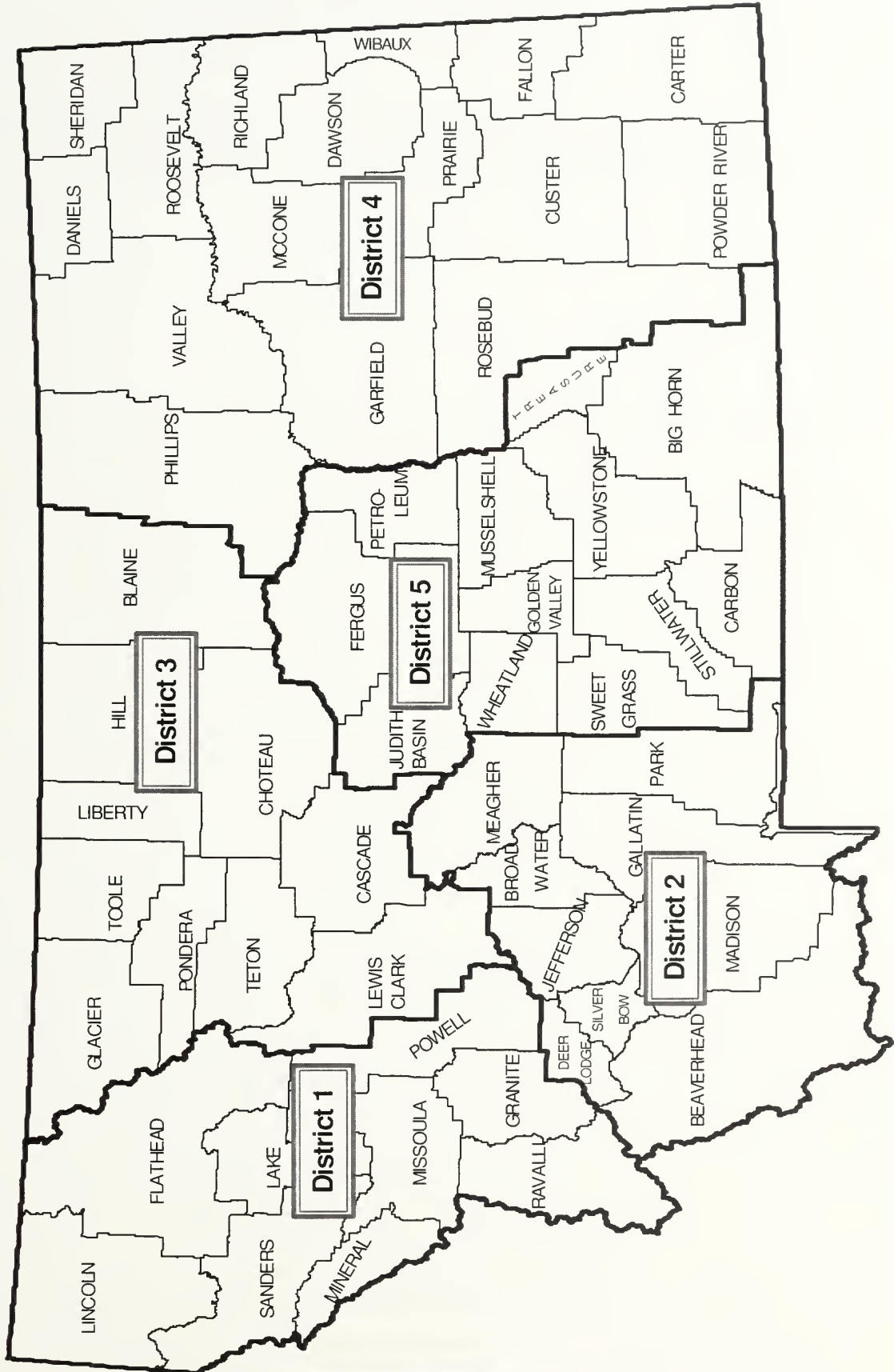
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## MDT Financial Districts



2001 TranPlan 21 Telephone Survey

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2001 Montanans are:

- Generally satisfied with the state's transportation system
- Satisfied with the physical condition of system components (except bus depots)
- Somewhat satisfied with the availability of various transportation services (except passenger rail service).

Montanans want more facilities, equipment, or services for:

- City streets
- Major highways other than interstates
- Rest areas
- Pedestrian walkways

Montanans viewed nearly all problems studied as small problems. The only problem viewed as moderately severe was rest area access.

Out of a list of 21 possible actions to improve Montana's transportation system, the highest priority actions are:

- Inform the public on transportation issues
- Improve roads and streets
- Keep up with current technology
- Improve safety
- Increase highway capacity due to growth
- Year-round access to rest areas

When compared to the previous telephone surveys done since 1994, the trends show:

- Overall system satisfaction is unchanged since 1994
- Satisfaction with the physical condition of system components has increased relative to previous studies
- Perceived system problems continue to be rated as small or medium problems
- Possible system improvements remain rated as medium priorities

Indications that warrant watching:

- The seven-year decline in Montanans' satisfaction with the availability of out-of-state air travel appeared to level off in 2001; while satisfaction with two other services declined
- It is likely that more Montanans in 2001 want improved rest area facilities, equipment, or services
- The seven-year increase in the priority rating of promoting the availability of out-of-state air travel service has begun to level off
- The 2001 priority rating of reducing traffic congestion declined slightly from its 1999 level

Montanans' top priorities for MDT's role in economic development are:

- Improving commercial air service to Montana
- Funding projects to boost business relocation to Montana
- Maintaining or updating Montana's existing transportation system

MDT's overall customer service and performance grades are in the B- to C+ range.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the *2001 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Survey* is to examine Montanans':

- Perceptions of the current condition of the transportation system
- Views about possible actions that could improve the transportation system in Montana
- Opinions about the quality of service Montana Department of Transportation provides to its customers

The telephone survey, one of several Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) public involvement processes, provides MDT policy makers and planners a model of different groups of Montanans and their transportation needs and preferences. The survey explores trends in public perceptions by maintaining comparability with the 1994, 1997, and 1999 *TranPlan 21* telephone surveys. The survey is designed to help MDT policy makers and planners examine the efficiency, capacity, and flexibility of Montana's transportation system to meet current needs and future demands.

### Survey Design

The *2001 TranPlan 21* telephone survey is the fourth iteration of a repeated, cross-sectional analysis, designed to provide both a snapshot of current public opinion and trend analysis. This survey was administered by telephone using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) process. Sampling was conducted using a Random-Digit Dial (RDD) process. The population sampled was all adult Montanans who live in a household with a working telephone. This population should not be confused with all Montanans, since

it excludes households without working telephones, the institutional population, and Montanans absent from the state during the survey period. The approximate sampling error for this survey is plus or minus 3.2 percent. This means that using this study design, in 95 of 100 samples a sampled mean would be within 3.2 percent of the population mean.

### Survey Administration

The survey was administered from April 26, 2001 through June 4, 2001. Of the 1,294 eligible respondents contacted, 932 (72 percent) participated in the survey. A 72 percent response rate is considered typical for a survey of this type<sup>1</sup>.

Respondents were selected randomly within households. The person answering the telephone had the same probability of being selected as any adult member of the household. If the selected member of the household was not home, an appointment was made to interview the absent respondent. Sampled individuals who were out of state during the administration period, and individuals with medical problems that precluded participation were ineligible. Telephone numbers drawn by the RDD process were ineligible if they were out-of-service, fax machines, or businesses. Numbers for which there was no answer were called repeatedly, during morning, evening, and weekend hours. Those numbers that still did not answer were ineligible.

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<sup>1</sup> Bradburn, Norman, and Sudman, Seymour: *Polls and Surveys: Understanding What They Tell Us*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988, page 123.

## The Respondents

The table below describes the respondents, and provides benchmarks against which they may be compared. Nearly half (52.4 percent) of respondents are female, and nearly half (47.6 percent) are male. The percentage of females and males in this sample is within the sampling margin of error of the 2000 Census<sup>2</sup>.

Distribution of the sample among races also approximates Census Bureau estimates<sup>3</sup>. American Indians or Alaskan Natives comprise 8.0 percent of respondents, while 95.9 percent are White. Asian or Pacific Islanders, Blacks, and Hispanics each comprise less than 1 percent of respondents. Note that due to the change in the way the race question is asked in the 2000 U.S. Census, reports of race distribution will no longer add to 100 percent and are not strictly comparable to estimates

made before 2000.

Survey respondent reports of education attainment show somewhat higher attainment than that reported in the most recent U.S. Census Bureau data. Among respondents age 25 and over, 5.3 percent report attaining less than a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED). 2000 Census Bureau data show that, among Montanans age 25 or older, 10.4 percent did not complete high school or earn a GED<sup>4</sup>. The 2001 respondents are more likely to report achieving a bachelors degree or higher than are those represented in the current Census Bureau data.

The mean age of 2001 respondents is 49.6 years, while the average age of Montanans age 18 and over in 2000 was 46.5<sup>5</sup> years. The difference in mean ages is within the margin of sampling error. How-

| <b>2001 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Survey Respondents (%)</b> | <b>1994</b> | <b>1997</b> | <b>1999</b> | <b>2001</b> | <b>2000 Census Bureau Est.</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Male</b>   | 49.8        | 49.4        | 52.1        | 47.6        | 49.3                           |
| <b>Female</b>   | 50.2        | 50.6        | 47.9        | 52.4        | 50.7                           |
| <b>American Indian/<br/>Alaskan Native</b>                        | NA          | 4.0         | 8.9         | 8.0         | 7.4                            |
| <b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>                                     | NA          | 0.6         | 0.3         | 0.2         | 0.9                            |
| <b>Hispanic</b>   | NA          | 0.7         | NA          | NA          | NA                             |
| <b>Black</b>  | NA          | 0.4         | 0.6         | 0.4         | 0.5                            |
| <b>White</b>  | NA          | 93.5        | 90.2        | 95.9        | 92.2                           |
| <b>Other/Don't Know</b>   | NA          | 0.8         | 0.0         | 0.6         | 0.9                            |
| <b>Mean Age</b>   | 44.8        | 49.6        | 49.0        | 49.6        | 46.5                           |
| <b>1-12 Grade</b>   | 5           | 9.5         | 8.0         | 5.3         | 10.4                           |
| <b>H.S. Diploma or Some College</b>                               | 62.3        | 61.2        | 59.8        | 60.6        | 65.8                           |
| <b>B.A. or More</b>   | 32.7        | 29.3        | 32.2        | 34.1        | 23.8                           |

<sup>2</sup> Gender estimates, US Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Montana Table DP-1.

<sup>3</sup> Race estimates, US Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Montana Table DP-1. Race alone or in combination with other races. Note that US OMB race definition changed in 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Educational attainment from Detailed Tables for the Current Population Reports, P20-536, Table 13, March 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Age estimate, US Census 2000 Census, Montana Table PCT 12, from SF 1 Data.



ever, it is likely that older people are easier to reach on the telephone. The respondents to the 2001 survey are probably slightly older than the over-17 population of Mon-

| <b>Respondents in Districts</b> |          |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>District</b>                 | <b>%</b> | <b>N</b> |
| District 1                      | 31.8     | 296      |
| District 2                      | 20.5     | 191      |
| District 3                      | 21.4     | 199      |
| District 4                      | 7.6      | 71       |
| District 5                      | 18.8     | 175      |

tana. The probable effect of this slight difference on the data is quite small.

The table above shows the breakdown of respondents by MDT financial districts. 31.8 percent of respondents live in MDT District 1 [ *Lincoln, Flathead, Sanders, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli, Granite, Powell, and Lake counties* ], 20.5 percent live in District 2 [ *Beaverhead, Madison, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, Jefferson, Broadwater, Meagher, Gallatin, and Park counties* ], 21.4 percent live in District 3 [ *Glacier, Pondera, Teton, Lewis and Clark, Cascade, Toole, Chouteau, Liberty, Hill, and Blaine counties* ], 7.6 percent live in District 4 [ *Phillips, Valley, Daniels, Sheridan, Roosevelt, Richland, McCone, Garfield, Dawson, Prairie, Rosbud, Fallon, Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Wibaux counties* ] and 18.8 percent lived in District 5 [ *Bighorn, Treasure, Stillwater, Sweetgrass, Wheatland, Yellowstone, Golden, Valley, Petroleum, Fergus, Musselshell, Judith Basin, and Carbon counties* ].

The income distribution for the respondents is listed in the table to the right. Since the income data were collected in categorical variables, direct comparison with Census Bureau data is not practical. However, based on observation of the 2001

TranPlan 21 Survey income distribution, it would appear that the distribution is slightly higher than the inflation-adjusted 2000 Census Bureau estimate of Montana's median household income, \$33,649<sup>6</sup>.

### Structure of this Report

The primary purpose of this report is to describe data collected by the *2001 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Telephone Survey*. Adequate description of these data requires presenting an extensive set of tables throughout the report. Analyses of the data are also presented. The report examines three areas. First, Montanans' attitudes about the state's transportation system are explored. Second, opinions about the customer service provided by MDT are described. Finally, trends in Montanans' attitudes about the transportation are discussed.

The text of the *2001 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Telephone Survey* questions may be found in Appendix A (Volume II). Tables of responses to each question are also found in Appendix A (Volume II), and can serve as a useful, quick-reference tool.

To determine differences between group means and percentages, t-tests were calculated and are reported throughout this document. T-test results reported here

| <b>Respondents Income Distribution</b> |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Income</b>                          | <b>%</b> |
| < \$10,000                             | 20.8     |
| \$10,000 - 19,999                      | 9.7      |
| \$20,000 - 34,999                      | 16.9     |
| \$35,000 - 49,999                      | 18.2     |
| \$50,000 - 100,000                     | 26.3     |
| > \$100,000                            | 8.1      |

<sup>6</sup> US Census Bureau, Money Income in the US: P60-213, September 2001, adjusted using CPI US City average 1982 - 1984 = 100.

will use the .05 significance level unless stated otherwise. If a value is said to differ from a second value at the .05 level, in 95 out of 100 samples the value will be found to differ from the second value. When comparing group means for this report, a Bonferroni-adjusted t-test was used. The reason for using an adjusted t-test is that when one makes many comparisons involving the same means, the probability increases that one or more comparisons will turn out to be statistically significant, even when the population means are equal<sup>7</sup>. For instance, if one compares mean satisfaction scores from five income groups using an unadjusted test, the probability that at least one mean will be found significantly different is almost one in three, even if the population means are not different.

Often in this report means will be listed in tables from highest to lowest. The following system will be used to tell readers if a mean is different from others in its group:

\*\*\*\* indicates value differs from four lowest group values

at .05 level.  
 \*\*\* indicates value differs from three lowest group values at .05 level.  
 \*\* indicates value differs from two lowest group values at .05 level.  
 \* indicates value differs from lowest group value at .05 level.  
 ^ indicates value differs from lowest group value at .10 level.

Unless noted otherwise, "Montanans" in this report refer to those ages 18 and older.

## II. ATTITUDES ABOUT MONTANA'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

### Overall Satisfaction

Montanans were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the state's transportation system on a scale of one to ten, where one is "very unsatisfied" and ten is "very satisfied." The mean response, 6.26, reflected moderate satisfaction. Though the midpoint between one and ten is 5.5, five must be considered the psychological midpoint, and the distance above five a measure of the intensity of satisfaction.

### Satisfaction with the Condition of System Components

Using the one to ten scale, respondents rated their satisfaction with the physical condition of various transportation system components. Table 1 summarizes Montana's responses.

The physical condition of airports is most satisfactory (7.54). People also express relatively strong satisfaction with interstate highways (7.37). Behind interstate highways is a group of

**Table 1**  
 Satisfaction with Condition of  
 Transportation System Components

|                       | Mean        | Lower<br>Limit | Upper<br>Limit | N          |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Airports              | 7.54        | 7.39           | 7.68           | 718        |
| Interstate Highways   | 7.37        | 7.25           | 7.49           | 902        |
| Other Major Highways  | 6.14        | 6.01           | 6.27           | 891        |
| Rest Areas            | 5.80        | 5.63           | 5.98           | 804        |
| Pedestrian Walkways   | 5.79        | 5.62           | 5.96           | 776        |
| Bicycle Pathways      | 5.31        | 5.09           | 5.54           | 582        |
| City Streets          | 5.03        | 4.88           | 5.17           | 907        |
| Bus Depots            | 4.76        | 4.54           | 4.99           | 442        |
| <b>Overall System</b> | <b>6.26</b> | <b>6.15</b>    | <b>6.38</b>    | <b>901</b> |

<sup>7</sup> Norusis, Marija: *Guide to Data Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995, page 291.

four components with which Montanans are moderately satisfied:

- Other major highways (6.14)
- Rest areas (5.80)
- Pedestrian walkways (5.79)
- Bicycle pathways (5.31)

Respondents expressed a neutral level of satisfaction with city streets (5.03). Dissatisfaction was found with the physical condition of only one component, bus de-

of differences between the means presented. Overall there is general agreement between respondents from the various MDT regions. District Two expressed more satisfaction with the condition of non-interstate major highways than did District Five. Districts Two and Four reported more satisfaction with the condition of rest areas than did District Three. District One is more satisfied with Bus Depots than are Districts Three and Five.

**Table 2**

Satisfaction with Condition of System Components by MDT District

|                       | District    |             |             |             |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                       | 1           | 2           | 3           | 4           | 5           |
| Airports              | 7.57        | 7.66        | 7.44        | 6.89        | 7.67        |
| Interstate Highway    | 7.36        | 7.49        | 7.56        | 7.19        | 7.11        |
| Other Major Highway   | 6.10        | 6.61*       | 6.06        | 6.03        | 5.82        |
| Rest Areas            | 5.76        | 6.13*       | 5.33        | 6.46*       | 5.76        |
| Ped Walk-ways         | 5.75        | 5.97        | 5.86        | 5.48        | 5.68        |
| Bicycle Paths         | 5.49        | 5.42        | 5.60        | 4.32        | 4.84        |
| City Streets          | 5.07        | 4.96        | 5.09        | 5.01        | 4.95        |
| Bus Depots            | 5.44**      | 4.81        | 4.19        | 4.24        | 4.41        |
| <b>Overall System</b> | <b>6.25</b> | <b>6.23</b> | <b>6.12</b> | <b>6.42</b> | <b>6.43</b> |

### Perceived Need for More Infrastructure

In addition to asking about the physical condition of the system components listed above, Montanans were asked whether each of those components needed additional facilities, equipment or services. People's perceptions about the need for more infrastructure are examined in Tables 3 and 4. Consistent with their satisfaction ratings, a majority of Montanans (51.2 percent) feel additional infrastructure is not needed for airports.

pots (4.76). Over 50 percent of respondents did not have enough information about bus depots. This high proportion of "Don't Knows" is typical compared to the 1994 - 1999 surveys.

Respondent satisfaction can also be examined by region within Montana. Table 2 presents mean satisfaction scores for each of the five MDT districts.

T-tests were calculated to assess the statistical significance

**Table 3**

Perceived Need for Additional Facilities, Equipment, or Services (%)

|                      | Yes  | No   | Don't Know | N   |
|----------------------|------|------|------------|-----|
| City Streets         | 76.5 | 19.9 | 3.7        | 931 |
| Other Major Highways | 66.9 | 26.5 | 6.6        | 931 |
| Ped Walkway          | 58.9 | 26.2 | 14.9       | 926 |
| Rest Areas           | 58.6 | 28.9 | 12.5       | 931 |
| Bicycle Pathways     | 53.4 | 19.8 | 26.7       | 928 |
| Interstate Highways  | 52.9 | 37.1 | 10.0       | 930 |
| Bus Depots           | 38.2 | 17.2 | 44.3       | 925 |
| Airports             | 25.1 | 51.2 | 23.6       | 931 |



Seventy-seven percent of Montanans believe that more facilities, equipment, or services are needed for city streets, and a large majority said the same thing for other

noted as a need more often by District Five residents than by District One residents.

#### Satisfaction with Service Availability

As seen in Table 5, people are moderately satisfied with the availability of the following services:

- Air transportation to destinations outside Montana (6.08)
  - Transit for the elderly or disabled (6.02)
  - Freight rail (6.00)
  - Air transportation to Montana destinations (5.55)
- Respondents are slightly positive in their satisfaction with the availability of local bus or van service (5.29) and inter-city bus service (5.28). Residents cite a neutral level of satisfaction with and taxi service (4.86). Montanans are

| <b>Table 4</b><br>Perceived Need for Additional Facilities, Equipment, or Services in Each MDT District (%) |          |       |       |      |       |
|---|----------|-------|-------|------|-------|
|   | District |       |       |      |       |
|   | 1        | 2     | 3     | 4    | 5     |
| City Streets  | 71.3     | 81.6^ | 76.4  | 73.2 | 80.5  |
| Other Major Highways  | 66.9     | 61.8  | 69.4  | 63.4 | 70.9  |
| Ped Walkway   | 62.2     | 60.7  | 51.8  | 49.3 | 61.1  |
| Rest Areas  | 57.4     | 58.1  | 67.8* | 42.3 | 57.1  |
| Bicycle Pathways  | 59.5     | 53.4  | 48.7  | 52.1 | 48.0  |
| Interstate Highways   | 44.6     | 55.0  | 53.8  | 54.9 | 62.3* |
| Bus Depots  | 35.1     | 36.7  | 40.2  | 39.4 | 42.3  |
| Airports  | 23.7     | 25.7  | 26.1  | 29.6 | 24.0  |

major highways (66.9 percent). A smaller majority advocates more infrastructure for the following:

- Pedestrian walkways (58.9 percent)
- Rest areas (58.6 percent)
- Bicycle pathways (53.4 percent)
- Interstate highways (52.9 percent)

More respondents say they don't know about bus depot infrastructure (44.3 percent) than those that say more depots are needed.

A few regional differences are found when looking across districts (see Table 4). More District Two respondents cite a need for additional city street facilities, equipment, or services than do District One respondents. District Three residents are more likely than District Four residents to say more rest area facilities or services are needed. Interstate highways are

dissatisfied with the availability of passenger rail service, giving this service a satisfaction score of only 4.14.

Table 6 shows the differences in Montana's districts of satisfaction of services. District Five reported the highest lev-

| <b>Table 5</b><br>Satisfaction with Service Availability<br>95% Confidence<br>Lower Upper<br>Mean Limit Limit N |      |      |      |     |
|---|------|------|------|-----|
| Air Trans Outside MT  | 6.08 | 5.91 | 6.25 | 767 |
| Transit Elderly /Disabled   | 6.02 | 5.83 | 6.22 | 628 |
| Freight Rail  | 6.00 | 5.74 | 6.26 | 376 |
| Air Trans in MT   | 5.55 | 5.36 | 5.74 | 628 |
| Local Bus or Van  | 5.29 | 5.05 | 5.53 | 530 |
| Inter City Bus  | 5.28 | 5.04 | 5.53 | 475 |
| Taxi  | 4.86 | 4.62 | 5.10 | 468 |
| Passenger Rail  | 4.14 | 3.90 | 4.37 | 529 |

els of satisfaction with service availability. Respondents from District Five reported significantly more satisfaction with the availability of air transportation to destinations outside Montana (6.43), air transportation within the state (5.99), local bus or van service (6.39), and inter-city bus service (6.41) than did other districts.

### Transportation System

Montanans rated possible problems on a scale from one to four, where one is "not a problem" and four is a "serious problem." Only one problem out of eleven studied was described by Montanans as moderate concerns. Respondents classified the remaining ten as small problems. This reinforces the positive overall level of satisfaction with the transportation system expressed by Montanans.

Year-round rest area access is the only problem considered moderately serious (2.73 on a scale of one to four, where one is "not a problem" and four is a "serious problem"). When considered as a complete group, this survey's respondents made a distinction between the *physical condition* of rest areas, with which they were somewhat satisfied,

**Table 6**  
Satisfaction with Service Availability  
By MDT District

|                           | District |       |        |        |          |
|---------------------------|----------|-------|--------|--------|----------|
|                           | 1        | 2     | 3      | 4      | 5        |
| Air Trans Outside MT      | 6.24*    | 6.17  | 5.47   | 6.00   | 6.43*    |
| Transit Elderly /Disabled | 5.98     | 6.24  | 5.38   | 6.60   | 6.21     |
| Freight Rail              | 6.04     | 6.20  | 5.93   | 5.62   | 6.01     |
| Air Trans in MT           | 5.79^    | 5.34  | 5.04   | 5.41   | 5.99*    |
| Local Bus or Van          | 5.28     | 4.63  | 5.31   | 4.00   | 6.39**** |
| Inter City Bus            | 5.16     | 5.65* | 4.43   | 4.49   | 6.41***  |
| Taxi                      | 4.68     | 4.81  | 4.89   | 4.10   | 5.47     |
| Passenger Rail            | 4.77**   | 2.71  | 4.90** | 5.05** | 2.91     |

Districts One reported a higher level of satisfaction with air transportation to destination within and outside Montana, and with passenger rail service, than other districts.

District Four expressed significant dissatisfaction with the availability of local bus or van service (4.00), inter-city bus service (4.49), and taxi service (4.10). Some of this dissatisfaction may be the result of the rural character of District Four.

Districts Two (2.71) and Five (2.91) expressed deep dissatisfaction with the availability of passenger rail service. The districts with AMTRAK service (One, Three, Four) reported neutral levels of satisfaction.

### Perceived Problems with Montana's

and access.

While the mean score of this item is informative, it is also important to look at the responses in greater detail. A closer look indicates that respondents view this problem with greater concern than the mean score indicates. A majority of respondents said year-round access to rest areas (55.9 percent) is either a moderate or serious problem.

The remaining issues are perhaps most noteworthy because respondents on average do not consider them to be very significant problems. A large majority of respondents say that adequate road signs (69.0 percent) are not problems at all. In addition, respondents find the remaining problems as either small or not problems at all.

**Table 7**  
Perceived Problems with Montana Transportation System (%)

|   | Not a<br>Problem | Small<br>Problem | Moderate<br>Problem | Serious<br>Problem | Don't<br>Know | Mean | N   |
|---|------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|------|-----|
| Year-Round Rest Area Access                         | 17.9             | 15.3             | 28.7                | 27.3               | 10.9          | 2.73 | 928 |
| Traffic Congestion                                  | 30.4             | 19.0             | 29.2                | 18.2               | 3.2           | 2.36 | 931 |
| Timely Resolution of<br>Safety Issues               | 26.4             | 16.9             | 26.7                | 12.2               | 17.7          | 2.30 | 931 |
| Vehicle Damage From<br>Construction and Maintenance | 25.6             | 28.7             | 27.9                | 12.2               | 5.6           | 2.28 | 931 |
| Number of Single<br>Occupant Vehicles               | 34.9             | 14.3             | 24.0                | 17.4               | 9.4           | 2.26 | 929 |
| Vehicle CO Emissions                                | 35.0             | 17.7             | 26.2                | 12.4               | 8.7           | 2.18 | 932 |
| Debris on Roadway                                   | 33.7             | 27.5             | 27.0                | 10.3               | 1.5           | 2.14 | 932 |
| Too Many Driveways &<br>Approaches                  | 48.5             | 19.4             | 18.7                | 7.6                | 5.8           | 1.85 | 930 |
| Road Maintenance<br>Impact on Air                   | 43.2             | 24.1             | 16.9                | 4.1                | 11.7          | 1.79 | 930 |
| Adequate Road Signs                                 | 69.0             | 16.3             | 11.9                | 2.0                | 0.8           | 1.47 | 932 |

While few significant problems emerge when examining statewide data, the view is quite different at the district level. Table 8 explores the percentage of respondents in each district that say an item is a moderate or serious problem.

Respondent views on traffic congestion are emblematic of Montana's current regional differences. The districts that contain Montana's two largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Billings and Missoula, differ significantly in their reports of problem severity. Nearly three of every five District One respondents say traffic congestion is a moderate or serious problem. This percentage is significantly larger than that found in any other district. A majority of District Five respondents also say traffic congestion is a moderate or serious problem.

In a similar vein, near majorities of District One residents (49.7 percent) and District Five residents (45.1 percent) say vehicle carbon dioxide emissions are a moderate or serious problem. Again, these percentages are significantly higher than the rest of the state.

And, while 29.7 percent of District One residents and 27.4 percent of District Five residents say dust caused by road maintenance is a moderate or serious problem, only an eighth of the other district residents site air quality impacts of road maintenance as even a moderate problem.

A slim majority (50.5 percent) of District One respondents said there are too many one-occupant vehicles on the road. This proportion is significantly higher than

that reported by District Three, Four, or Five.

District One respondents are also more likely to say (39.5 percent) that having too many driveways and approaches is a moderate or serious problem. Only 22.5 percent of District Two respondents agree, while the totals for the remaining districts are even lower.

Montana's other districts said the possible problems examined, with the exceptions of year-round rest area access and traffic congestion, are small problems or are not problems at all.

**Table 8**  
Perceived Moderate or Serious Problems with  
Montana Transportation System (%) by District

|   | 1        | 2      | 3    | 4    | 5        |
|---|----------|--------|------|------|----------|
| Year-Round Rest Area Access                         | 55.8     | 57.1   | 59.3 | 43.7 | 56.1     |
| Traffic Congestion                                  | 62.5***^ | 49.7** | 30.8 | 16.9 | 50.3**   |
| Timely Resolution of<br>Safety Issues               | 43.9     | 37.7   | 32.2 | 32.9 | 42.3     |
| Vehicle Damage From Construction<br>And Maintenance | 43.6     | 36.1   | 36.9 | 39.4 | 42.9     |
| Number of Single<br>Occupant Vehicles               | 50.5***^ | 40.3   | 36.4 | 29.6 | 37.9     |
| Vehicle CO Emissions                                | 49.7***  | 29.3   | 31.7 | 21.1 | 45.1***^ |
| Debris on Roadway                                   | 40.5     | 34.6   | 32.2 | 29.6 | 44.0     |
| Too Many Driveways &<br>Approaches                  | 39.5**** | 22.5   | 20.2 | 8.5  | 22.4     |
| Road Maintenance<br>Impact on Air Quality           | 29.7***  | 12.6   | 13.7 | 11.4 | 27.4***  |
| Adequate Road Signs                                 | 16.6     | 15.7   | 11.6 | 7.0  | 13.1     |



### Actions to Improve Transportation System

Respondents were asked to prioritize 21 possible actions to improve Montana's transportation system (Table 9). Respondents were given four choices of priority category

| <b>Table 9</b><br>Priority of Possible Actions to Improve Transportation System (%) |                   |                 |                    |                  |               |      |     |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|------|-----|
|   | Not a<br>Priority | Low<br>Priority | Medium<br>Priority | High<br>Priority | Don't<br>Know | Mean | N   |
| Inform Public on Transportation Issues  | 2.6               | 8.3             | 33.7               | 54.4             | 1.1           | 3.41 | 932 |
| Improve Other Roads & Streets   | 2.4               | 8.5             | 38.6               | 48.9             | 1.6           | 3.36 | 932 |
| Keep Up With Current Tech   | 3.6               | 9.3             | 31.2               | 49.1             | 6.7           | 3.35 | 932 |
| Improve Safety  | 4.9               | 10.7            | 34.5               | 47.0             | 2.8           | 3.27 | 931 |
| Increase Highway Capacity Due to Growth   | 5.2               | 11.6            | 33.1               | 45.9             | 4.3           | 3.25 | 931 |
| Year-Round Rest Area Access   | 4.1               | 13.3            | 34.5               | 44.8             | 3.3           | 3.24 | 931 |
| Promote Existing Passenger Rail   | 6.7               | 15.2            | 30.0               | 35.6             | 12.5          | 3.08 | 927 |
| Promote Use of Local Bus/Vans   | 6.0               | 15.8            | 35.4               | 34.3             | 8.5           | 3.07 | 930 |
| Ensure Adequate Ped Facilities  | 7.0               | 17.5            | 35.8               | 37.4             | 2.3           | 3.06 | 930 |
| Improve Highway Maintenance   | 6.9               | 13.9            | 44.3               | 32.8             | 2.3           | 3.05 | 931 |
| Improve Interstates & Major Highways  | 5.3               | 18.8            | 42.3               | 29.8             | 3.9           | 3.00 | 931 |
| Promote Air Service   | 10.4              | 14.3            | 30.7               | 33.4             | 11.2          | 2.98 | 929 |
| Ensure Adequate Bicycle Facilities  | 7.8               | 20.1            | 32.3               | 31.1             | 8.7           | 2.95 | 930 |
| Reduce Vehicle CO Emissions   | 9.3               | 23.4            | 27.8               | 35.3             | 4.2           | 2.93 | 928 |
| Reduce Road Dust from Maintenance   | 9.8               | 21.7            | 31.0               | 31.5             | 6.0           | 2.90 | 930 |
| Improve Bus Depots  | 5.5               | 17.5            | 24.8               | 20.0             | 32.1          | 2.87 | 924 |
| Reduce Traffic Congestion   | 12.2              | 24.7            | 29.9               | 30.7             | 2.5           | 2.81 | 932 |
| Rehab Historic Trans Facilities   | 9.2               | 28.1            | 35.7               | 23.4             | 3.7           | 2.76 | 928 |
| Regulate Highway Approaches   | 10.1              | 25.2            | 37.1               | 19.6             | 8.0           | 2.72 | 928 |
| Minimize Construction Environmental Impact  | 14.0              | 26.2            | 31.6               | 20.5             | 7.6           | 2.64 | 930 |
| Reduce Single Occ. Vehicle Use  | 25.2              | 29.4            | 22.4               | 15.5             | 7.6           | 2.31 | 930 |

**Table 10**  
Percent in Each MDT District Say Possible Actions to Improve Transportation System a Medium or High Priority

|  | 1      | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5      |
|--|--------|------|------|------|--------|
| Inform Public on Transportation Issues     | 87.7   | 90.6 | 85.4 | 84.5 | 90.3   |
| Improve Other Roads & Streets              | 87.8   | 86.9 | 86.4 | 92.6 | 87.4   |
| Keep Up With Current Tech                  | 80.4   | 80.6 | 77.9 | 77.5 | 84.0   |
| Improve Safety                             | 84.8   | 81.2 | 79.9 | 73.2 | 81.1   |
| Increase Highway Capacity Due to Growth    | 80.4   | 79.1 | 76.4 | 80.3 | 78.3   |
| Year-Round Rest Area Access                | 77.4   | 84.8 | 76.9 | 77.5 | 79.4   |
| Promote Existing Passenger Rail            | 66.2   | 63.4 | 65.8 | 70.4 | 62.9   |
| Promote Use of Local Bus/Vans              | 72.0   | 70.7 | 64.8 | 67.6 | 70.3   |
| Ensure Adequate Ped Facilities             | 74.7   | 74.4 | 73.9 | 63.4 | 72.0   |
| Improve Highway Maintenance                | 78.7   | 73.8 | 76.4 | 78.9 | 77.1   |
| Improve Interstates & Major Highways       | 69.3   | 73.3 | 69.9 | 77.5 | 75.4   |
| Promote Air Service                        | 64.2   | 64.9 | 66.8 | 57.8 | 61.1   |
| Ensure Adequate Bicycle Facilities         | 70.6^^ | 62.8 | 58.3 | 53.5 | 60.6   |
| Reduce Vehicle CO Emissions                | 65.9   | 57.1 | 61.9 | 57.8 | 67.4   |
| Reduce Road Dust from Maintenance          | 65.5   | 62.8 | 60.3 | 53.5 | 62.3   |
| Improve Bus Depots                         | 39.2   | 47.1 | 43.2 | 39.4 | 53.7*  |
| Reduce Traffic Congestion                  | 70.3** | 60.7 | 50.3 | 36.6 | 65.7** |
| Rehab Historic Trans Facilities            | 59.8   | 63.4 | 52.3 | 56.3 | 60.6   |
| Regulate Highway Approaches                | 59.5   | 56.0 | 51.8 | 50.7 | 59.4   |
| Minimize Construction Environmental Impact | 55.7   | 47.6 | 51.8 | 40.9 | 55.4   |
| Reduce 1-Occ. Vehicle Use                  | 44.9*  | 37.7 | 29.2 | 35.2 | 36.6   |

ries. They are:

- No priority
- Low priority
- Medium priority
- High priority

A value of one was assigned to the no pri-

ority category, two to low priority, three to medium priority, and four to high priority. Like the perceived problem items, a very large majority of respondents felt qualified to prioritize the action items presented.

While Montana's view most transportation system problems as small, they believe solving those problems should take on a medium priority. Twenty of the twenty-one possible action items were, on average, classified by Montanans as medium priorities. Only one possible action was considered a low priority.

Three system-wide actions received top priority scores. MDT keeping the public informed is the highest priority overall (3.41). MDT keeping current with new technology (3.35) is statistically tied with informing the public. Improving transportation safety (3.27) scores nearly as high.

Respondents rated solutions to three possible problems with individual system components highest. Improving roads and streets (3.36) was respondents' highest priority solution to a system component problem. Providing year-round access to rest areas (3.24) was statistically tied with roads and streets, as was increasing highway capacity due to growth (3.25).

Reducing one-occupant vehicle use (2.31) was the only action rated by respondents as a low priority. Priorities for possible actions to improve the transportation system were also examined across each of the five MDT regions. The percentage of respondents in each district who say an action is a medium or high priority is displayed below. Since, on average, respondents classify almost all of the studied actions as medium priorities the differences between districts largely focus on the relative magnitude of majorities.

There is general agreement among all of the MDT districts about six of the highest priority actions (see Table 10). District One displayed the highest percentage saying an action is a medium or high priority in eleven of twenty-one items studied. This difference is especially significant in three items:

- Reduce traffic congestion
- Ensure adequate bicycle facilities
- Reduce one-occupant vehicle use.

District Five residents' priorities are higher than other in two areas, reducing traffic congestion and improving bus depots.

### **III. TRENDS IN MONTANA'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

The 2001 TranPlan21 Public Involvement Telephone Survey was designed to provide the opportunity to analyze trends in perceptions about Montana's transportation system. Like previous portions of this report, comparisons here are made using t-tests. Chapter One provides an explanation of why t-tests are used, and how differences between values are designated. Trends are reported only if the differences from the 2001 value are significant at the .05 level. The values reported in the charts presented here are rounded for clarity.

The 2001 survey results are compared to the results found in 1994, 1997, and 1999. Several questions were added to this study in 1997, thus in some cases comparisons can only be made between 1997, 1999, and 2001.

#### **Satisfaction with the Transportation System**

In each of the four iterations of this study respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the physical condition of various system components on a one to ten scale, where one is very unsatisfied and ten is very satisfied. The surveys also asked respondents whether or not more facilities, equipment, or services are needed for certain system components.

When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with Montana's transportation system in 2001, respondents' attitudes



were unchanged (6.26) from 1994 (6.20), 1997 (6.28) or 1999 (6.30). Figure 1 shows Montanans' satisfaction with various system components.

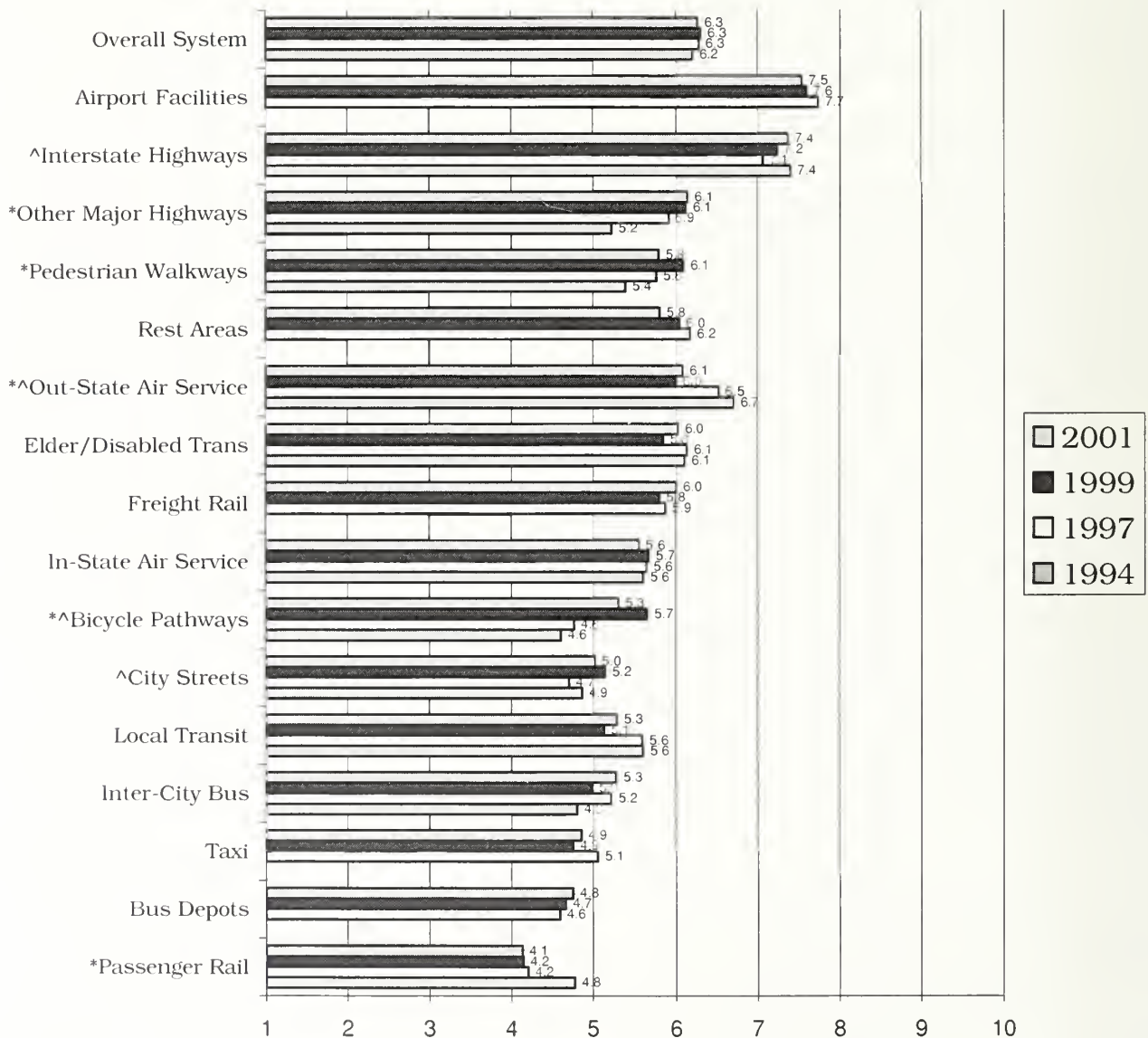
Relative to previous studies, satisfaction with the physical condition of system components is improved in 2001. Of the eight items studied, satisfac-

tion is higher in five, while the remaining four showed no significant change.

Montanans' rating of the physical condition of interstate highways in 2001 (7.37) has improved since 1997 (7.06). The rating of the condition of other major highways in 2001 (6.14) has increased since 1994 (5.23). Pedestrian walkways

**Figure 1**

**Trends in System Component Satisfaction  
1994 - 2001**



\* 94-01 difference significant at .05 level

^ 97-01 difference significant at .05 level

# 99-01 difference significant at .05 level



are reported to be in better condition in 2001 (5.79) than they were in 1994 (5.39). The condition of bicycle pathways in 2001 is rated higher (5.31) than in either 1994 (4.61) or 1997 (4.77). The condition of city streets is cited as better in 2001 (5.03) than in 1997 (4.71).

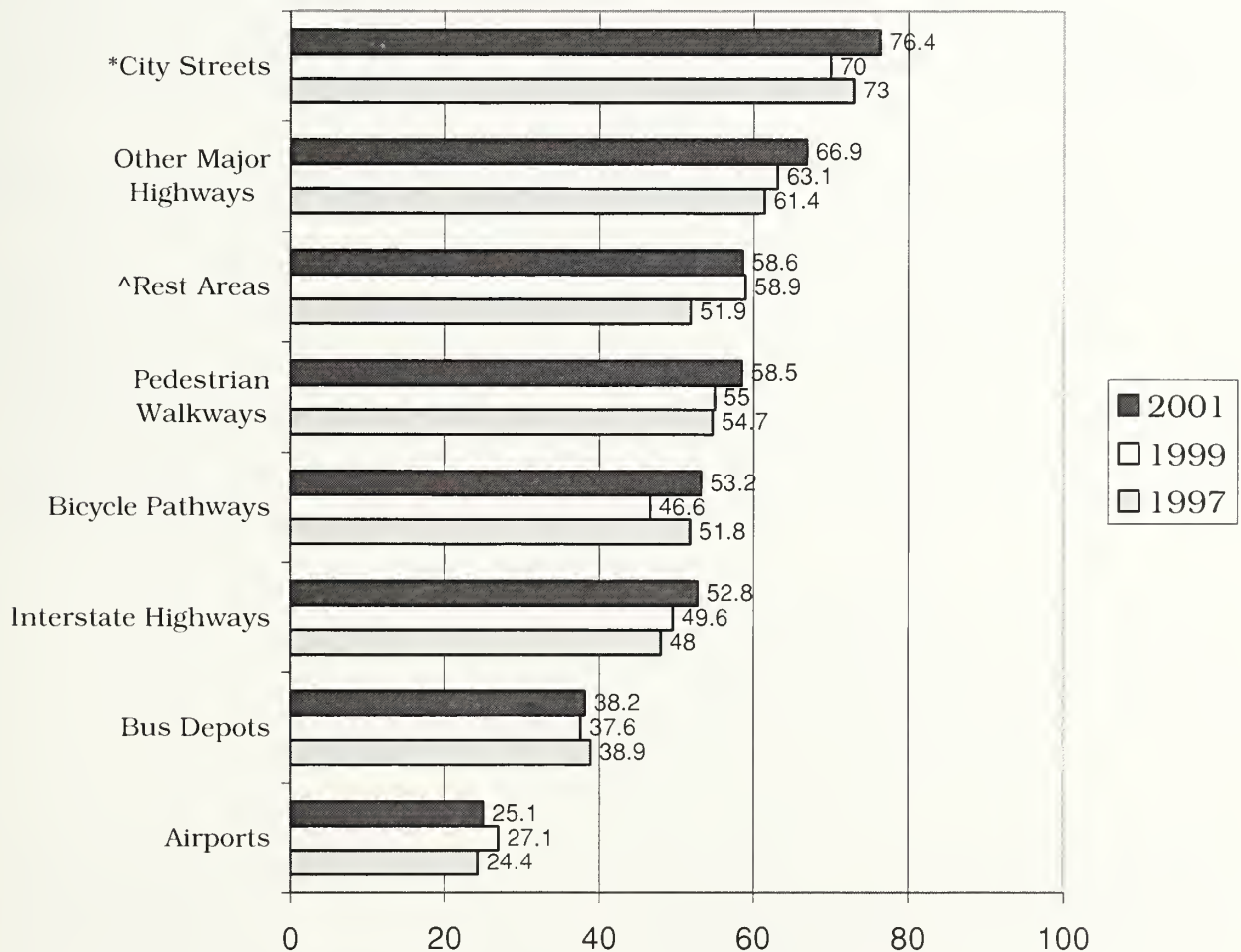
with availability of transportation services in 2001 as the same or lower than some earlier survey respondents. Two of the eight services studied in 2001 were rated lower than in the 1994 or 1997 studies, but no change was found between 1999 and 2001.

In a slight contrast to their ratings of the physical condition of system components, Montanans rate their satisfaction

Satisfaction with the availability of out-of-state air travel services declined steadily from 6.70 in 1994 to 6.00 in 1999.

**Figure 2**

**Trends in Perceived Need for More Facilities,  
Equipment, or Services 1997 - 2001  
(% Yes Responses)**



^ 97-01 difference significant at .05 level

\* 99-01 difference significant at .05 level

This decline leveled off at 6.08 in 2001. Satisfaction with the availability of passenger rail services was mildly unfavorable in 1994 (4.78). In 1999 mean satisfaction dropped to 4.15, and in 2001 it was 4.14.

### **Perceived Need for More Facilities, Equipment, or Services**

In 1997, 1999, and 2001 respondents were asked whether they perceived a need for certain other additional facilities, equipment, or services (see Figure 2). Two significant changes were observed in 2001 when comparing responses to those in 1997 and 1999.

A greater number of respondents (76.4 percent) in 2001 said they want more facilities, equipment, or services for city streets than in 1999 (70 percent). This may be due to the fact that the 2001 survey was conducted during the spring.

In 2001 respondents (58.6 percent) were more likely to say they want more rest area facilities, equipment, or services than were 1997 respondents (51.9 percent). However, in 1999 58.9 percent of respondents said more rest area facilities, equipment, or services were needed. The reason a difference can be noted in 2001 but not in 1999 is that the 2001 sample size is larger than the 1999 sample size, making measurements in 2001 more precise.

The increase in respondents' perceived need for bicycle pathways in 1999 and 2001 is 6.6 percent. This increase just misses the statistical significance criteria established for this study, but it may be relevant in a practical sense.

### **Perceived Problems with Montana's Transportation System**

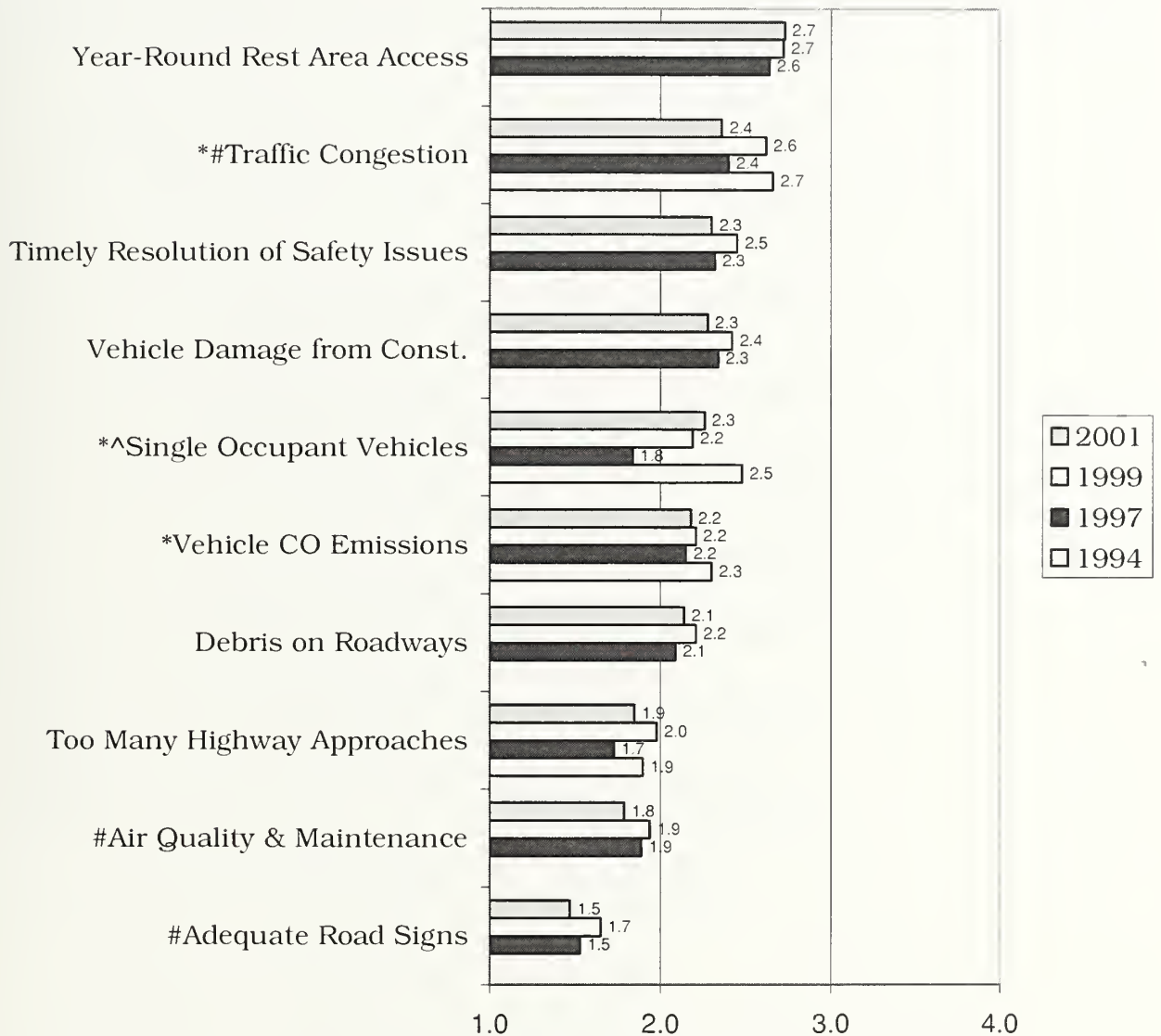
Questions about respondents' perceptions concerning possible problems were asked in 1994, 1997, and 1999. Questions in each survey used the same format. Respondents were asked to rate

possible problems as "no problem," a "small problem," a "moderate problem," or a "serious problem." A no problem response was coded as one, small problem was coded as two, moderate problem was coded as three, and serious was coded as four. Mean problem-rating scores are reported here.

Montanans rated the severity of perceived problems in 2001 the same or slightly lower than did earlier respondents (see the Figure 3 on the next page). Three of ten severity ratings decreased in 2001 from 1999. In addition, eight of ten 2001 point estimates - ignoring the confidence intervals around those estimates - decreased over the 1999 levels. It is important to note that these are small, relative decreases. In absolute terms no problem was rated as serious. All the 2001 problems were rated as being of small or medium severity.

No striking, long-term trends emerge from analysis of these particular data. Opinions on these issues seem to vary within a rather tight range. Concern about traffic congestion in 2001 dropped to its 1997 level, while it was significantly higher in both 1994 and 1999. This vacillation is also evident in perception of single occupant vehicles as a possible problem. The 2001 level of concern is significantly higher than in 1997 but is also significantly lower than in 1994.

**Figure 3**  
**Trends in Perceived System Problems**  
**1994 - 2001**



\* 94-01 difference significant at .05 level

^ 97-01 difference significant at .05 level

# 99-01 difference significant at .05 level

### Possible Actions to Improve the Transportation System

In each survey respondents were asked to prioritize a number of possible system improvements. These potential improvement actions were rated "no priority,"

"low priority," "medium priority," or "high priority." The coding for the priorities was as follows:

- No priority = one
- Low priority = two
- Medium priority = three

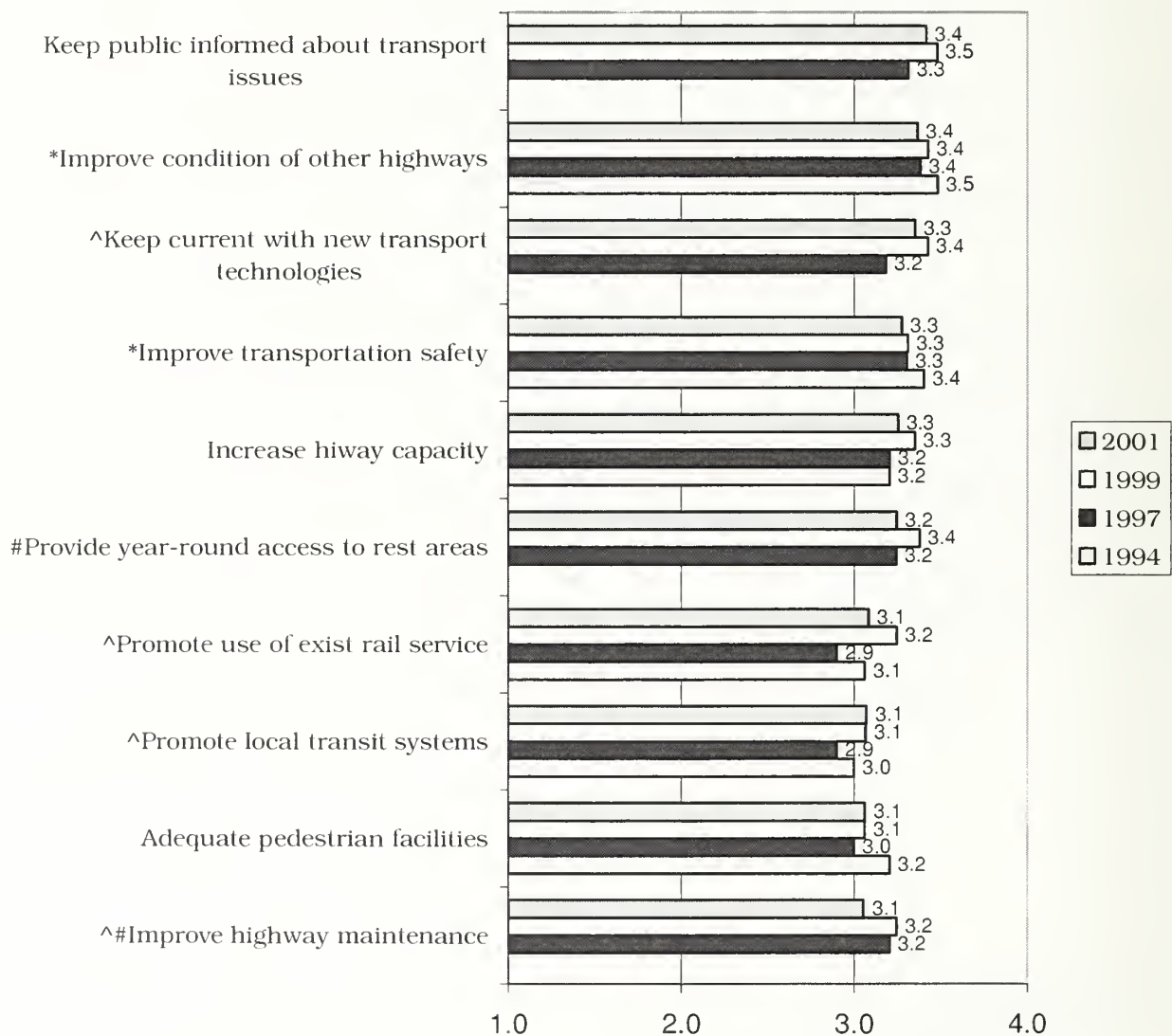
- High priority = four

In general, respondents to all three studies rate nearly all of the possible actions as medium priorities. Figure 4 illustrates the respondents' priorities. In each year only one item, reducing single occupant vehicle use, is rated a low priority.

Montanans in general said possible system improvements were the same or perhaps a lower priority in 2001 when compared to 1999. Looking at point estimates without considering confidence intervals, 16 of 21 possible system improvements were rated a lower priority in 2001

**Figure 4**

**Trends in Priority of Possible System Improvements  
1994 - 2001**



\* 94-01 difference significant at .05 level

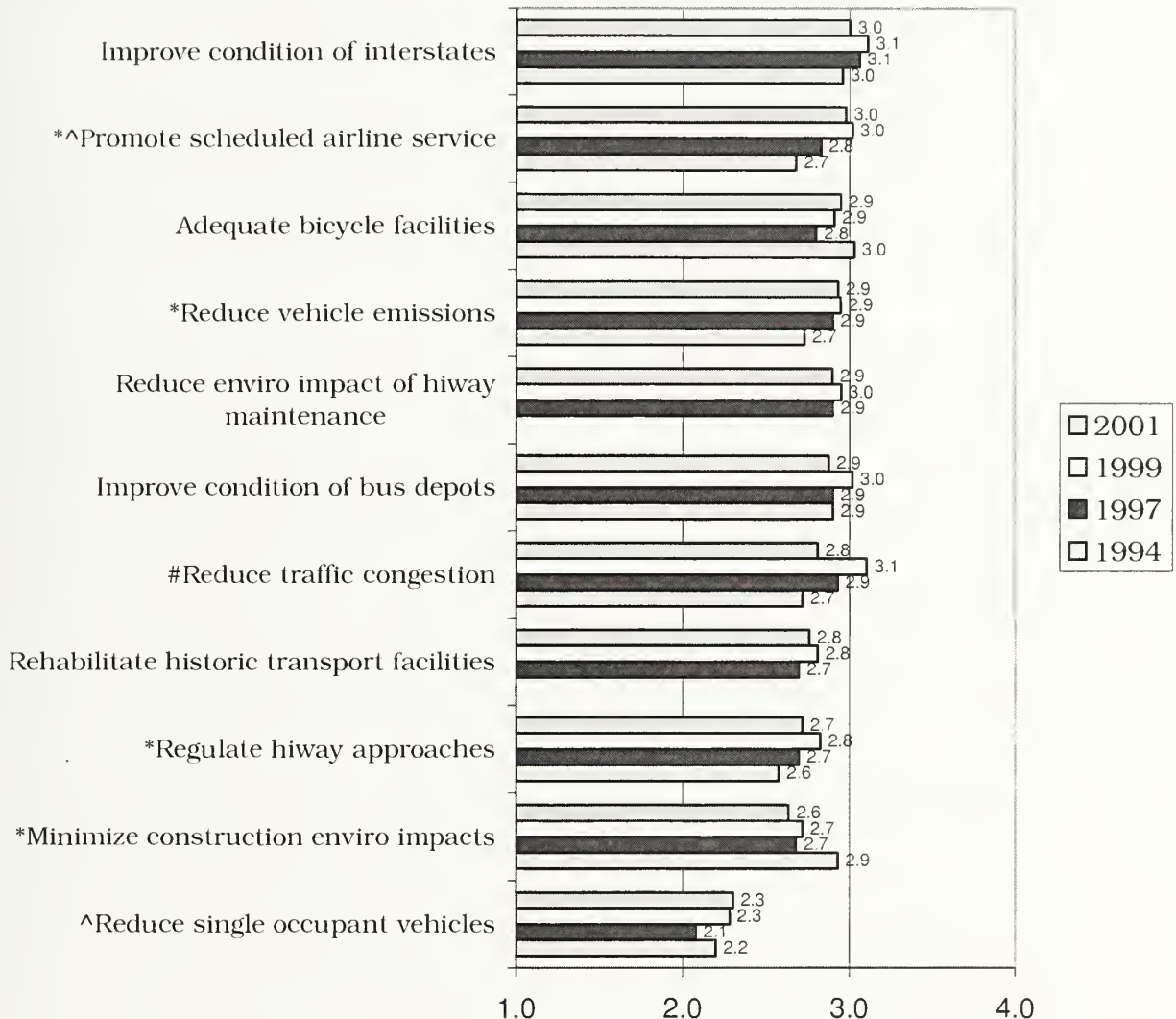
^ 97-01 difference significant at .05 level

# 99-01 difference significant at .05 level



**Figure 4 (cont.)**

**Trends in Priority of Possible System Improvements  
1994 - 2001 (cont.)**



\* 94-01 difference significant at .05 level

^ 97-01 difference significant at .05 level

# 99-01 difference significant at .05 level

than in 1999. When confidence intervals are considered all but two of the 16 priority declines were statistically insignificant.

Two additional trends can be found when examining respondents' priorities for possible transportation system improvements. First, in 2001 the mean priority rat-

ing for promoting scheduled airline service (2.98) was significantly higher than either the 1994 (2.68) or 1997 ratings (2.83). The increase found in the 1997 and 1999 studies does appear to have leveled off in 2001.

Second, the priority rating of minimizing the environmental impact of road

construction has decreased over the seven-year study period. The 1994 priority rating of 2.93 dropped to 2.72 in 1999 and to 2.64 in 2001.

One trend that appeared in 1999 appears to have reversed in 2001. In 1999 reducing traffic congestion was found to have increased in priority in 1997 (2.93) and 1999 (3.10) from its 1994 (2.68) rating. However, in 2001 the priority rating of reducing traffic congestion decreased to 2.81.

#### IV. MDT ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The 2001 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Telephone Survey includes several questions that examine public attitudes on possible MDT actions to support and improve Montana's economy. Those questions are analyzed in the following section.

Of the eight possible economic de-

velopment actions studied, respondents rated seven as a somewhat high priority. The top seven priority scores, while they can be distinguished from each other statistically, are not very different in a practical sense. Working to improve commercial air service to Montana was the highest rated priority (3.25).

The bottom score, redirecting funds from statewide improvement efforts to expansion projects on specific corridors (2.74) is significantly lower than the other scores in both a statistical and practical sense.

MDT Districts differ in two possible economic development priorities (see Table 12 on the following page). District Three is more likely than District One to say it is a somewhat or very high priority to provide funds for a transportation project to encourage a business to relocate in Montana. In addition, Districts Three and Five are

**Table 11**  
Priority of Possible MDT Economic Development Actions (%)

|  | Very Low | Somewhat Low | High | Very High | Don't Know | Mean | N   |
|--|----------|--------------|------|-----------|------------|------|-----|
| Improve commercial air to Montana  | 4.5      | 12.3         | 32.6 | 44.4      | 6.1        | 3.25 | 927 |
| Fund projects to boost business relocation in MT                           | 6.8      | 13.4         | 33.9 | 42.2      | 3.7        | 3.16 | 924 |
| Maintain/update existing Transportation system                             | 2.8      | 12.8         | 48.9 | 32.1      | 3.5        | 3.14 | 925 |
| Consider economic development in MDT projects                              | 4.8      | 12.6         | 42.2 | 30.4      | 10.0       | 3.09 | 920 |
| Improve links between road, air and rail                                   | 5.8      | 12.8         | 42.3 | 31.9      | 7.2        | 3.08 | 925 |
| Increase transportation movement between MT and neighbors including Canada | 7.4      | 15.6         | 41.0 | 31.7      | 4.4        | 3.01 | 925 |
| Remove transportation system bottlenecks                                   | 5.7      | 20.1         | 38.3 | 30.4      | 5.4        | 2.99 | 924 |
| Redirect funds for economic development on specific corridors              | 10.3     | 22.5         | 36.3 | 20.2      | 10.8       | 2.74 | 917 |

**Table 12**  
Percent in Each MDT District Say Possible Economic Development Actions  
Are a Somewhat or Very High Priority

|   | 1    | 2    | 3     | 4    | 5     |
|---|------|------|-------|------|-------|
| Improve commercial air service to MT  | 78.6 | 85.1 | 83.4  | 76.6 | 85.3  |
| Fund projects to boost business relocation in MT                            | 74.1 | 76.8 | 84.6^ | 82.1 | 82.1  |
| Maintain/update existing transportation system                              | 82.8 | 86.0 | 85.2  | 80.6 | 83.9  |
| Consider economic development factors in MDT project selection process      | 79.5 | 78.5 | 81.0  | 79.4 | 85.4  |
| Improve links between road, air, and rail                                   | 76.8 | 78.9 | 85.3  | 77.8 | 81.3  |
| Increase transportation movements between MT and neighbors including Canada | 72.9 | 72.3 | 81.4  | 79.4 | 78.1  |
| Remove transportation system bottlenecks                                    | 77.7 | 72.5 | 68.6  | 63.5 | 72.4  |
| Redirect funds for economic development on specific corridors               | 55.7 | 61.7 | 69.3* | 60.7 | 72.4* |

more likely than District One to cite redirecting funds from statewide improvement efforts to expansion projects on specific corridors as a high priority.

Respondents were also asked if they had any other suggestions for ways MDT can help improve Montana's economy. This question was asked using an open-ended format. Open-ended questions place more burden on respondents. This higher level of burden often results in high item nonresponse rates. This item exhibits a high level of item nonresponse. Due to the level of item nonresponse present in this item, the reader should take care when analyzing these responses.

Respondents mentioned a set of five possible economic development actions most often. They encouraged MDT to hire more workers and pay them more. Montanans also urged MDT to increase passenger airline and rail service to Montana. Finally,

Montanans urged MDT to do what it can to lower the gas tax and gasoline prices in general.

## **V. OVERALL MDT CUSTOMER SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE**

The *2001 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Survey* asks a number of questions that examine public opinion regarding overall MDT performance and responsiveness to the public. The results of those questions are presented in this section.

As an introduction to the topic of MDT's overall performance respondents were asked how much they have seen, read, or heard about MDT and to what degree they are interested in MDT's activities. A slim majority (51.6 percent) of respondents said they had seen or heard nothing at all or not much about MDT. In contrast, three of four respondents said they are interested in MDT and its activities.



**Table 13**  
MDT Overall Performance and Customer Service Grades (%)

|  | A or B | C    | D or F | Don't Know | Mean | N   |
|--|--------|------|--------|------------|------|-----|
| Quality of service now compared with 5 years ago | 53.7   | 23.1 | 3.7    | 19.5       | 2.78 | 914 |
| MDT quality of service grade last year           | 56.7   | 32.9 | 4.0    | 6.4        | 2.65 | 921 |
| MDT overall performance grade last year          | 51.0   | 36.8 | 3.9    | 8.3        | 2.59 | 921 |
| MDT quality of planning grade last year          | 39.2   | 36.5 | 7.5    | 16.9       | 2.44 | 919 |
| MDT construction inconvenience                   | 45.5   | 37.7 | 10.9   | 6.0        | 2.41 | 921 |
| MDT inform customers on upcoming decisions       | 35.4   | 38.1 | 12.6   | 13.9       | 2.32 | 919 |
| MDT encourage customer input grade last year     | 34.4   | 33.2 | 15.0   | 17.4       | 2.32 | 921 |
| MDT respond to customers                         | 24.4   | 34.8 | 9.7    | 31.1       | 2.26 | 917 |

Respondents were then asked to grade various aspects of MDT overall performance and customer service. The results of these questions are found in the table below. In general, Montanans give MDT a B- or C+ grade for customer service and performance.

Montanans give three aspects of performance and customer service higher grades compared with other aspects. The highest grade (2.78 on a four-point scale) was given to the quality of MDT service compared with five years ago. The second and third highest grades were given to the

**Table 14**  
Average MDT Overall Performance and Customer Service Grades in Each MDT District

|  | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|
| Quality of service now compared with 5 years ago | 2.78 | 2.84 | 2.77 | 2.68 | 2.75 |
| MDT quality of service grade last year           | 2.66 | 2.70 | 2.62 | 2.61 | 2.64 |
| MDT overall performance grade last year          | 2.58 | 2.67 | 2.51 | 2.60 | 2.60 |
| MDT quality of planning grade last year          | 2.38 | 2.47 | 2.43 | 2.65 | 2.44 |
| MDT construction inconvenience                   | 2.40 | 2.43 | 2.45 | 2.51 | 2.34 |
| MDT inform customers on upcoming decisions       | 2.26 | 2.28 | 2.35 | 2.47 | 2.38 |
| MDT encourage customer input grade last year     | 2.23 | 2.22 | 2.34 | 2.59 | 2.45 |
| MDT respond to customers                         | 2.18 | 2.23 | 2.22 | 2.44 | 2.39 |



quality of MDT service in the last year (2.65) and to MDT's overall performance in the last year (2.59).

Three other elements of customer service received the lowest grades. These included informing customers about upcoming decisions (2.32), encouraging customer input (2.32), and responding to customers (2.26).

Respondent grades of MDT overall performance and customer service can also be examined by MDT District (see the Table 14). In sum, there is widespread agreement between the MDT Districts regarding MDT overall performance and customer service grades. There is no statistically significant difference between districts on each of the aspects examined. While District Four appears to grade some components higher than other districts, readers should keep in mind the relatively low number of responses collected from District Four respondents. This relatively low N makes the confidence interval around District Four means somewhat larger than those of the other districts.

### **Improvement Suggestions**

Those respondents who rated MDT performance a D or F were asked what MDT could do to improve. Due to the low number of responses to this series of open-ended questions, readers should exercise caution when analyzing these responses.

To improve overall MDT performance, respondents most often recommended improving road and city street maintenance. Montanans also suggested improving efforts to communicate with the public.

To improve the quality of service provided by MDT respondents said MDT workers should work harder and more efficiently. In addition, they suggested that MDT make road repairs in a more timely manner.

Respondents said the overall quality of MDT planning would be improved by listening to the concerns of the public. Respondents were three times more likely to mention this possible improvement than they were others. Respondents also encouraged MDT to speed up its planning process.

Among those who expressed dissatisfaction with MDT efforts at encouraging customers to tell the Department new ideas and concerns, and those who are unhappy with MDT response to customer ideas and concerns, their suggestions for improving were largely the same. These respondents told MDT to "actually listen." In addition, respondents encouraged MDT to proactively communicate important information to the public using a variety of methods including direct mail, flyers, video, telephone calls, public meetings, speeches to civic organizations, and the electronic and print media. Respondents who expressed displeasure with MDT efforts to keep customers fully informed reiterated these suggestions for proactive communication.

Two themes predominate among suggestions made by people who are dissatisfied by the inconvenience caused by road construction or maintenance. First, respondents ask that MDT improve road construction signs, flaggers, and detours. Second, respondents suggest improving MDT efforts at providing drivers with advance warning of upcoming projects. A smaller proportion of respondents offer contrasting recommendations. Some say MDT should work on smaller portions of projects at any given time, while others say MDT should speed up in their work.

## **VI. OTHER ISSUES**

To complete the survey's exploration of attitudes concerning the transportation system, respondents were asked if there were any other issues which should be ad-

dressed by MDT. The table below lists the responses given by more than two respondents. These responses should be viewed as a rough measure of the intensity of feelings about certain issues.

The four most prominent issues raised by Montanans were:

1. Providing more passenger rail service

2. Improve county and secondary road maintenance
3. Improve maintenance and safety on US Highway 93
4. Decreasing the speed limit on secondary highways.

Fifteen respondents said US Highway 93 safety and maintenance should be improved, while another 5 said US Highway

**Table 15**  
Other Issues that Should Be Addressed by MDT: Top Responses

| Issue  | N  | Issue   | N |
|--|----|---|---|
| Provide more passenger rail service              | 34 | Keep trucks off narrow roads                          | 7 |
| Improve county and secondary road maintenance    | 16 | Gas price too high                                    | 6 |
| Improve maintenance and safety US Highway 93     | 15 | Widen/ straighten/ flatten 2 lane highways            | 6 |
| Decrease speed limit on secondary roads          | 14 | Widen US Highway 93 to four lanes                     | 5 |
| Improve general road maintenance                 | 14 | Increase bus service in cities                        | 5 |
| Enforce drinking, speeding and insurance laws    | 13 | Improve road status reporting                         | 5 |
| Increase bus service in smaller towns            | 11 | Reduce traffic congestion                             | 5 |
| More air travel available                        | 11 | Improve highways in growth areas                      | 5 |
| Improve highway snow removal                     | 10 | Increase number of rest areas                         | 4 |
| Improve city street maintenance                  | 9  | Improve rest area maintenance and safety              | 3 |
| Improve quality of road repairs                  | 9  | Make road between Great Falls and Billings four lanes | 3 |
| Improve interstate and infrastructure            | 9  | Reducing traffic blockage from construction           | 3 |
| Widen / improve safety of US Highway 2           | 8  | Increase number of highway patrol                     | 3 |
| Improve footpaths and bicycle paths              | 7  | More transportation for elderly or disabled           | 3 |
| Improve intersections/ lights, turn lanes, signs | 7  | More enforcement of laws regulating semi trucks       | 3 |

93 should be widened.

Sixteen respondents said county and secondary road maintenance should be improved, while another 14 said general road maintenance should be improved.

Thirteen respondents said drinking while driving laws, speeding laws, or insur-

ance laws should be more vigorously enforced.

Eleven respondents said the availability of air travel should be increased, and 11 also said the availability of bus service to smaller communities should be increased.







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